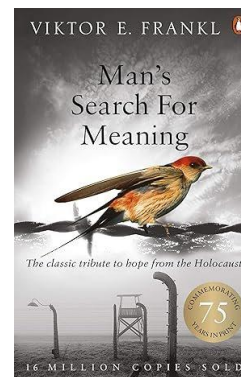


Dear Parents,

Without doubt, the most challenging book I have ever read is 'Man's Search for Meaning' – not challenging in terms of the language, but in terms of the content. It was written by Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz. It was recommended to me by a friend who lost his sight in his late 30s; it was a book he found helpful as he faced a new reality.



During Wednesday's assembly, we focussed on **the Power of Books**, and I shared Viktor Frankl's story and his account as a survivor of Auschwitz. His mother, father, brother and pregnant wife were all killed in Nazi concentration camps. In his book 'Man's Search for Meaning', he observed that in Auschwitz, the one freedom that could not be taken away by the guards in the confinement of the concentration camp, was the freedom to choose his attitude. Specifically, the prisoners who chose to help others, maintained some sense of purpose and dignity. He concluded that one of the key elements of survival, and indeed of life itself, is the ability to choose our response to any circumstance.

I appreciate it can be a hard task persuading teenagers to read books in this digital age, but reading is one of the strongest predictors of academic success, not just in English, but across all subjects. However, more than that, books help us to discover new worlds, explore different perspectives and empathise with people we may never meet.

During the assembly Mrs Killen (*Humankind, A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman & *Silas Marner* by George Eliot), Mr Clewlow (*The Hobbit* by JRR Tolkien) and Mr Baggaley (*Moby Dick* by Herman Melville) all shared some of their favourite books. And finally, Anna from Year 12 also announced the Charity Initiative 'BeBook', which is encouraging everyone to donate good quality books for Ukraine. If you do have any books you wish to donate, we will be collecting after half-term.



I hope over half-term many pupils take up the challenge to read.

With best wishes for the half-term break,

Jon Shaw
Head

Highlights of the week

Cambridge offer: A huge congratulations to Natt Kritchanarat on receiving an offer to read Chemical Engineering at **Trinity College, Cambridge**. Trinity is widely regarded as the most competitive of the Cambridge colleges to secure a place in Maths and STEM subjects and so this is an even more impressive achievement.

House Music Competition: Thank you to everyone involved in organising and running of last night's House Music Competition. Thank you particularly to the house captains and every pupil who participated in a night of high calibre performances by all houses.

Midwinter Music Concert: Well done to the choral singers and instrumentalists for their part in a highly successful and entertaining Midwinter Concert in Big School last Saturday evening. Money was raised for Age Concern and the Music Department Appeal.

Year 10 Science trip to Manchester to hear lectures by 5 inspiring scientists speaking about their field of science. Speakers include Professors Robert Winston, Jim Al-Khalili, Gillian Forrester, Kate Lancaster and Tim Gabriel.

Under 10 Netball: Well done to all the girls for an emphatic victory over Oswestry (15-2).